

THE TIMES, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1901

MR. CHAMBERLAIN IN EDINBURGH.

A great Unionist demonstration under the auspices of the East and North of Scotland Liberal Unionist Association and the Scottish Conservative Association was held in the Waverley Market, Edinburgh, last night, at which Mr. Chamberlain, M.P., was the chief speaker. This is the third great political gathering that has been held in the market, the first being that addressed by Mr. Gladstone in 1879, when there was an audience of about 18,000 persons, and the second a meeting in 1889, when Mr. Balfour addressed an audience of about 10,000 Conservatives. The building last night was seated for 7,500, but on this occasion, owing to the impossibility of a speaker being heard in all parts of such a large building as the market, a hall was specially constructed inside the market area and roofed over with alternating bands of red, white, and blue cloth. Telephone wires radiated from a point above the speaker's head to the remotest corner of the roof, there being altogether no less than eight miles of wire employed. The doors of the market were thrown open at a quarter to 7, and by 7 o'clock, one hour before the proceedings were advertised to commence, the hall was practically full. During the time of waiting musical selections were played by a band. A platform was erected capable of holding 500 persons, and those who occupied seats upon it included the Marquis of Graham, the Marquis of Zetland, the Earl of Camperdown, the Earl of Dalkeith, M.P., the Earl of Leven and Melville, the Earl of Mar and Kellie, Lord Blythswood, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Elibank, Lord Elcho, Lord Lamington, Mr. J. A. Campbell, M.P., Sir J. Fergusson, M.P., Colonel the Hon. R. Boyle, the Hon. T. Cochrane, M.P., the Hon. J. E. Gordon, M.P., the Hon. A. Gordon, the Hon. J. H. C. Hosier, M.P. the Hon. C. M. Ramsay, the Lord Advocate, K.C., M.P., the Solicitor General for Scotland. K.C., M.P., Sir A. N. Agnew, M.P., Sir W. Arrol, M.P., Sir W. O. Dalgleish, Sir C. W. Cayzer, M.P., Sir J. Gilmour, Sir A. Buchan-Hepburn, Sir Simon M. Lockhart, Sir L. M. Iver, M.P., Sir Andrew McDonald, Sir R. Menzies, Sir W. H. Rattigen, M.P., Sir J. H. Ramsay, Sir M. J. McStewart, M.P., Sir W. Thorburn, M.P., Sir M. Mitchell-Thomson, Sir J. B. Tuke, M.P.,

Sir J. Usher, Mr. H. T. Anstruther M.P., Mr. A. Bignold, M.P., Mr. A. Cameron Corbett, M.P., Mr. F. L. Harris, M.P., Mr. J McKillop M.P., Mr. W. J. Maxwell, M.P., Mr. D. N. Nicol, M.P., Mr. C. L. Ort-Ewing, M.P., Mr. J. Reid, M.P., Mr. J. Stroyan, M.P., Mr. J. Parker Smith, M.P., Mr. A. Wylie, M.P., Mr. John Wilson, M.P. (St. Rollox), Mt. J. C. Wason, M.P., and Mr. John Wilson, M.P. (Falkirk Burghs). A good many ladies were included in the gathering to which admission was by ticket. Mr. Chamberlain arrived at the hall at a quarter to 8 and had a mixed reception from the small crowd which had gathered outside, the cheers predominating. He entered the hall at 8 precisely accompanied by Mrs. Chamberlain, and was received with prolonged cheers.

The Duke of Montross, who took the chair, said Sir Edward Grey, speaking in Edinburgh a fortnight ago, asked whether there was any one who was satisfied with the present Government, and, if so, what they had to be I satisfied with. That vast audience assembled from all parts of Scotland gave an answer to the first part of the question. (Loud cheers.) They were satisfied because Mr. Chamberlain had been at the head of the Colonial Office during a time of great trial and stress, and because, with the assistance of Lord Milner, he had been able to maintain for Great Britain her South African possessions. He was a sound and firm Imperialist, compared with whose speeches the vapourings of the Little Englanders were as the chirpings of sparrows. (Cheers.)

Mr. Chamber, who was received with loud and prolonged cheers, the audience rising and waving their hats and handkerchiefs, said: — My Lord Duke, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, — I am very sensible of the responsibility which rests upon any man in my position, who has rashly undertaken to address such a meeting as this. I see before me a vast and representative audience, numbering, I am told, more than 8,000 people. That is an opportunity which seldom falls to the lot of any public speaker, but I am conscious of a still vaster multitude outside. I know that by your kindness I am permitted from this historic platform in the metropolis of Scotland to address the Scottish people (cheers)—a nation which has taken more than its proportionate part in building up and sustaining the British Empire (cheers), and whose sons, down to the present day, have been foremost as pioneers, as missionaries, as soldiers, and as administrators in carrying British civilization, British power, and British justice to the four corners of the earth. (Cheers.) This is not, therefore, the time nor the place to reply to the mere platitudes of party controversy (hear, hear), and still less to personal abuse. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) That is the stock-in-trade of some politicians.

(Laughter.) The great current of our national history is governed by national sentiment and national conviction. It is not influenced in the slightest degree by the handfuls of mud that are thrown into it from time to time by petty animosity and disappointed ambition (loud cheers) ; and, I therefore, although I am here to defend the Government to which I have the honour to belong (" You are able I to do so," and a voice, " Judas "), it is rather to the broad issues of the controversy that I would desire to direct your attention than to petty and comparatively unimportant details.

THE ABUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

It is true I have read in recent speeches, some, I think, made in this city, that, the Government is the worst Government of modern times.

(Interruption.) Yes, I have heard that of every Government in my time. But not only that. I see that we are accused of being blundering and ignorant and apathetic and effete (laughter) ; and, as if that were not sufficient, another section of our critics declare that we are inhuman and barbarous and cruel and dishonest. (Laughter.) I observe this comprehensive vituperation and I pass it by. (Loud cheers.) After all, I what does it mean? It means only that the speakers have arrived at the painful conviction that they no longer enjoy the confidence of the country, because these complaints are addressed to you much more than to us. We are the Government, but who made us the Government? (Hear, hear.) The country (cheers); and if the country has chosen men so inefficient, so degraded, so wicked, the fault is in the country, and I can understand how some of our opponents can say that the country is mad, in I which opinion I believe they are confirmed by the inmates of all the lunatic asylums in the United Kingdom. (Laughter and cheers.) Now, if I could imagine for a moment that my opponents would listen to me, I would venture to suggest to them that they would do better to cease these wholesale revilings and to consider what, after all, is of greater importance, what is the cause of their own failure?

THE CHANGE OF OPINION IN SCOTLAND

Why have they ceased to secure the support of this good Kingdom of Scotland? That is a most interesting inquiry (laughter), but nobody on the other side has engaged in it yet. I do not believe that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is engaged in it to-night (hisses and cheers), and, therefore, I must make the inquiry for them. (Hear, hear). What are the facts? Surely

they are sufficiently extraordinary. We all know Scotland. We know that. Scotland and the Scottish people are most tenacious in their beliefs, whether religious, or political, or any other. We know that they are as a rule anchored upon a rock from which it is very difficult to dislodge them, and yet in 16 years I have seen a change which is almost a revolution. (Hear, hear.) Sixteen years ago, in the election of 1885, out of 72 members from Scotland 63 claimed the name of Liberals, and to-day the number of those who represent the remnant of the Liberal party (laughter) is 33. (Laughter.) For the first time members bearing the Liberal name are in the minority in Scotland since the Reform Bill of 1832. (Cheers.) Well, what is the cause of that? Is not that worth a moment's consideration? (A voice "Home Rule.") I should be very ungrateful if I did not, in the first place, express my appreciation of the services of those who have contributed to this result, the services of the political associations and of the Unionist Press, who have put aside old jealousies and prejudices (hear, hear), and have worked together, shoulder to shoulder, in a common cause for the interest, for the security, for the existence of the nation. (Cheers.) The example of the Unionist Press, headed, as it is, by the great metropolitan newspaper, the Scotsman (cheers and some hisses), whose courage, whose consistency ("Oh," and cheers), whose resolution are worthy of all praise, might well be extensively imitated south of the border. (Cheers.) But, great as these services have been, I do not think it is to them mainly that we can attribute the change with which I am dealing. It is due, in my opinion, to the fact that the Scottish people gradually, reluctantly, have come to the conclusion that the Liberal party as at present constituted are the friends of every country but their own (great cheering), and cannot be safely trusted with the interests and the honour of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) That feeling has been, as I have pointed out, of slow growth. It began in 1886, when these gentlemen were willing to consider the destruction of the integrity of the United Kingdom. It has been continued and confirmed by their attitude during the present war. (Hear, hear.)

AN ALIAN PARTY IN THE HOUSE.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are two subjects of vital interest to every Briton. One is the question of Home Rule, the other is the question of the war; and upon both these questions the Opposition is divided and the leaders of the Opposition are unable to put before you any consistent, any intelligible opinion. (Hear, hear.) The situation is a singular one. How can you give your confidence to a party which is in a state of perpetual flux? (Laughter.) Here at the present moment the question has been forced upon us of the relations

between the leader of the Opposition and the Irish Nationalist party. What is the Irish Nationalist party? During the last Session of Parliament 80 gentlemen, many of them mere delegates (hear, hear), paid to give a vote (hear, hear), came to the House of Commons, and they were led by a man who openly prayed for the success of the Boers, for the defeat of the British forces. (Hisses.) The rank and file were there by their own confession to destroy the efficiency of the House of Commons, to degrade it, if possible, to their own level. (Cheers.) The policy of this party is clear enough. It is the policy of the Boers, except that they fight with their tongues and not with their swords., (Cheers.) These gentlemen would wear us out. They think they can force us to surrender by making themselves a nuisance. (Laughter.) Ladies and gentlemen, I think myself that they mistake the resolution of the British people (cheers); but, be that as it may, here you have in the House of Commons, in the very centre of our Constitution, an alien party which by their own account — there is no ambiguity — are the avowed enemies of the British Empire and British policy. Yes, we shall know how to deal with them. (Loud cheers.)

THE OPPOSITION AND THE IRISH.

But what is the attitude of the leaders of a great English party (interruption) — of a great British party (Laughter and Cheers.) The correction is needed for there are a great number of Scotsmen among them. (Laughter.) What is to be said of the representatives of a great British party who in the face of these men take up an attitude of tacit acquiescence? (“Shame.”) They tell us — we were told the other day at Ladybank — that they claim their independence. A pretty attitude for British politicians, so detached, so careless that they are ready to be independent of the enemies of their country. Well, but that is not enough. What leader of the Opposition, of any section of that fortuitous concourse of atoms (laughter) — what leader is there that has abandoned the Home Rule policy? That policy, no man can doubt for a moment, would place in the hands of those enemies of ours a power to do incalculable mischief. (Cheers.) What would it have meant to us if at the present moment the Home Rule policy had been successful? Who can understand, and have often made allowance for those who were carried away in 1886 by their loyalty to their leader, by their devotion to old party ties and by their belief in the sanguine anticipations of those who told them that Home Rule would produce a union of hearts. But now there is no excuse for accepting such a statement as that. Why, just consider for a moment in your own minds what it is we are engaged in — a war, a great war, the

greatest of last century since the beginning of the century. We are engaged in this great war; we have sent a quarter of a million of soldiers abroad, and Ireland is tranquil and prosperous (cheers) and is co-operating with us in maintaining the interests of the Empire. (Loud cheers.) But if these gentlemen who now insult the House of Commons, who now openly shout for the Mahdi and pray for the Boors, had had a Parliament of their own, if all the strings of Irish government had been in their hands, if they had had the power which we should have given them by such legislation, do you think the results would have been the same? Is it not certain that they would have refused to pay their contribution, that they would have placed us in a position of embarrassment and even danger, which we cannot contemplate with satisfaction? (Cheers.) Gentlemen, notwithstanding this, notwithstanding these plain facts, you find the leaders of the Opposition reiterating their adhesion to Home Rule, and, stung by some insult which the Irish members throw at them quite as much as they do at us, or stimulated by some particular act of outrage on the British Parliament, if encouraged at last to make a declaration, they come down to some platform in the country and declare that they are "independent," and within a few days you find them actively engaged in wiping out the traces of their unfortunate declaration. Do we forget bold speech that was made some years ago in the House of Lords about "the predominant partner"? A short time afterwards in this city the speech was explained away and retracted. Nothing remained. (Laughter.) Now, within the last few weeks you have another member of the Cabinet of which the speaker to whom I referred was the head — you have Mr. Asquith coming to Ladybank and declaring his independence and a week later he comes to Edinburgh to say that independence is consistent with frequent co-operation (laughter) with the Irish Nationalists, and that Mr. Redmond, he thinks, may very likely be ready to bargain, (Laughter.) I desire in all this to impress upon you that a party which is willing to co-operate with the enemies of this country, which is willing to bargain with those who are endeavouring to destroy our most valued institutions — such a party deserves the defeat which they have received at your hands. (Cheers.)

OBSTRUCTION AND IRISH REPRESENTATION.

Well, now, under these circumstances I do not suppose that I have any right to expect any assistance from the Opposition in dealing with Irish rowdiness and Irish obstruction. We shall have to do that ourselves. (Laughter and cheers.) They will never want an excuse for co-operation with 80 Irish votes, and we shall be left to vindicate the honour of Parliament as

best we may. I appeal to you — and this is my first appeal tonight — I appeal to you and to the people of Scotland to give us their support. (Loud cheers.) We propose in the next Session of Parliament to bring forward rules, an alteration of rules, which will give to the majority of the House of Commons a greater control over its own business (cheers), a greater control over the men who insult and outrage it (cheers), and we shall endeavour to protect the mother of Parliaments from those who would destroy her usefulness and her reputation. (Cheers.) That is the interest of the whole people of the United Kingdom. Parliament is the guarantee of our liberties, Parliament is threatened with destruction and degradation by the men with whom the leaders of the Opposition are willing to co-operate and to bargain. (Cheers.) But that is not the only Irish question. There is the question daily becoming more important of the representation of Ireland. (Cheers.) Let me explain for the benefit of Mr. Asquith that, if any alteration is proposed in the representation of Ireland, it is not in the slightest degree with the hope that thereby we shall deal with obstruction. I could pick out 20 Irishmen myself in the House of Commons who would be quite sufficient to prevent it succeeding in any of its business under the present rules. No larger number is necessary. Obstruction must be dealt with by an alteration of the rules. If we place before you for your consideration the question of the representation of Ireland it is because we think that the present representation is an abuse and a scandal. (Cheers.) The question is not urgent or immediate., No alteration can be made except in immediate anticipation of a general dissolution, and we are not contemplating it. (Laughter and cheers.) We are not contemplating the necessity at the present time. (Laughter.) But when we nearer to that time I think we shall ask you whether you think that the Irish representation is so precious to you, is so valuable to national interests, that it is desirable to continue it on a scale which gives to the Irish people a representation which enormously exceeds the proportionate representation of Scotland and of England. If we were to count by population Ireland has 30 members more than she ought to have in proportion to Scotland. If, however, we were to count, as was done at the time of the Union, in some reference to the contributions which the different countries pay to Imperial purposes, then we should find that the over proportion was something like 40 or 50 members. I say that that constitutes an abuse, and that there is no reason why it should be permanently continued. (Cheers.) In all these matters we have to depend upon the support of the people of Great Britain. We can expect nothing from the patriotism of the Opposition. (Hear, hear.) We think their relations with the Irish Nationalist party are dangerous (hear, hear) to the Empire. (Cheers.)

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE WAR.

Now, I want you to consider the attitude of the enemies of the Empire who have been prominent during the progress of this great war in which we have been engaged — what has been their attitude towards this struggle. I want to make the issue as clear and simple as I can, and that object I will first of all restate to you in a few sentences the position of his Majesty's Government. I do not think you will find there is much ambiguity about that. We are unanimously of opinion that this war was forced upon us (loud cheers) by the insolent ultimatum which was sent by the leaders of the two Republics and by the unprovoked invasion of his Majesty's territories at the time when negotiations were still proceeding. (Cheers.) Yes, there is a fable, a fable which has been set afloat by those pro-Boer organs whose ingenuity and imagination are never at fault when the question is to belittle and to belie their own country — there has been a fable set afloat that the Boers only anticipated decision of the Government, that the Government was preparing a declaration of war at the time when the ultimatum was delivered. The statement is absolutely untrue. (Cheers.) There is not a shade of a shadow of foundation for it. At the time we were, indeed, endeavouring to strengthen our forces in South Africa. These had been reduced until they were almost insignificant in view of the enormous armaments of the Boers. But if we had been permitted to do that, it was our intention to have resumed negotiations with a better chance of success, and, at all events, on more equal terms. But we never contemplated taking the offensive (cheers), and, on the contrary, we did everything that men could do, by conciliation and concession, to avoid a war which we knew perfectly well would be a great and serious war, a difficult undertaking even for the resources of such a country as this. But we went to the extreme limits. We even risked the loyal support of British subjects in the South African colonies. We did everything that was humanly possible, and, having failed, I say that the war was just and necessary and could not be avoided. (Loud cheers.) But then, since the war, again and again, we have publicly stated terms which, I venture to say, are more liberal than have ever before been offered by a conquering nation to its beaten foes. (Cheers.) Those terms have been refused, and under those circumstances there is a limit to concessions: (Hear, hear.) The terms are those which to a certain extent represent the settled policy of this country, but no more shall they be represented as conditions of peace.

THE CONDUCT OF THE PEOPLE.

The war must be carried on to the end (loud and prolonged cheers), and when the settlement comes it must be one which will render for ever impossible the recurrence of the danger from which we have so narrowly escaped. (Cheers.) Now, then, I appeal to you again — I say will you, will those behind you, support this policy and support all the measures which are necessary to give effect to it? (Cheers.) I cannot conceal, I cannot find words to express, my admiration for the conduct of the people both of Scotland and England in the course of this struggle (cheers) — their patience, their determination, their resolution. They have not been moved by artificial panics, they have not been moved by the Opposition or the criticism either of our enemies abroad or of our false friends at home. They have never flinched from the sacrifices which war involves — and this war perhaps more than many others — and in spite of the delays and the disappointments which have been so eagerly seized upon by some of our opponents, they have not abated one jot or tittle of the resolution with which they entered upon this struggle. (Cheers.) And we the Government, your servants, created by you to be the instruments of the policy that you approve — we have need of your encouragement. (Cheers.) We have had it in no small measure, but we who are prominent in your service are the mark for every cowardly attack or base insinuation which is made by men who think that they can better attack the national cause and the national policy in the persons of the national representatives. (Cheers.) You will give those men their answer. (Cheers.) You did so at the last election. (Hear, hear.) Do it at the next. (Cheers.) Now, the views I have put before you are the views unchangeable, definite, unmistakable of his Majesty's Government. (Hear, hear.)

THE PRO-BOER CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

What are the views of the Opposition? That is more difficult to decide. (Laughter.) Even from some of the interjections which I have heard since I have been standing here, I can see that there may be differences of opinion in the representatives of the Liberal party who are present in this hall. (Laughter.) But who is to speak for them? I know perfectly well which is the noisiest section of the party. They are the pro-Boors (laughter), and the consequence is that they stand now before Europe as the representatives of the Liberal party. (Cheers.) And if they misrepresent the Liberal party, then it is the fault of the official leaders and of the majority of the Liberal party, who are not sufficiently articulate in repudiating their policy. (Hear, hear.) Now, let us see what the pro-Boers say. After all, I deal with them with great satisfaction, in one sense, because there is no mistaking what they mean.

They tell you that this war is the greatest crime that has ever been committed. They never tire of explaining that British statesmen and British administrators, British generals and British soldiers, have descended to the depths of infamy, of cruelty, of dishonesty. There is no calumny too gross or too palpable that these men will not swallow and propagate to the injury of their country and their countrymen. (Hear, hear.) I will not call them the enemies of their country. They would be very much hurt if I were to say anything of the kind; but, at all events, if they do not pray for the success of the Boers, they give them a good deal of assistance. (Cheers and laughter.) They encourage them to prolong the war, and, what I think, perhaps, is as bad, they furnish ill-wishers of this country throughout the length and breadth of Europe with material for their libels upon our people. (Cheers.) These men, if they are not enemies, constitute in our land an anti-British faction. Now, then, I say, it is the duty, I believe it would be the interest of any party which seeks for the confidence of the country, to repudiate such a party frankly in words which could not be mistaken, so that at all events these gentlemen should not parade in the garb of representatives of the once honoured Liberal party. (Cheers.) But do they do it? Is there any leader on the other side who ever has given this effective repudiation? There is the leader of the Liberal party, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who, by a curious coincidence, is speaking at Stirling to-night, and I am sure we all recognize that he is a person of great amiability. We do not grudge to him the resolutions of votes of thanks which it seems to be now the object of every Liberal meeting to pass. (Laughter.) But where is the leadership? (" Hear, near," and cheers.) Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, is one of those men

“ Now to this and now to that side leaning
Means not but blunders round about a meaning.”

He tells us at one time that the war ought to have been avoided. In that case it was an unjust war. The next day he tells us it ought to be prosecuted with the utmost vigour. (Laughter.) He says that he can see no necessity for preparation. A few days later he denounced the Government for not being prepared. He clamours that something should be done, and then he carps at and criticizes everything that we endeavour to do. Well, that is the party, the section of the party which enjoys itself preciously on the fence. (Loud laughter.)

THS ATTITUDE OF THE LIBERAL IMPERIALISTS.

There remains the Liberal Imperialist. If they had the courage of their opinions they would save the Liberal party (hear, hear), but their Imperialism is always in brackets. (Cheers.) They tell us that they admit the justice of the war and, admitting the justice of the war, it is their duty to support the only Government Executive which is to carry out the war, and yet you find them joining every attack that is made against the government. They are willing to co-operate with Irishmen, with pro-Boers, and Little Englanders whenever they think they can put the Government in a hole. Ladies and gentlemen, in my opinion, and I think in the opinion of this country, the situation is quite too serious for manoeuvring of this kind. (Hear, hear.) This is not the time for half measures or half-hearted men. (Hear, hear.) The war is just or it is unjust. If it is just, then give to the Government, at all events for a time, your unswerving support. If it is unjust, then there is nothing between you and the pro-Boers, who at least have the honesty to say what they mean. In that case it is your duty to admit your mistake, give up all for which you have been contending, call back your armies — yes, and I suppose compensate the Boers for the trouble and expense to which they have been put in invading our territory. (Laughter.) But, ladies and gentlemen, I have stated pretty clearly what I think to be the great issues between the Opposition on one side, multifarious as their views are, and the Government on the other.

THE DURATION OF THE WAR.

But there is still another class of critics with whom I have to deal — the candid friends, the members of our own household, who are so afraid of spoiling the child that the rod is never out of their hands. (Laughter.) You know that they have been exceptionally active during the last few days. I cannot say that I think that they produced much effect upon the country, but still I desire to meet the charges that they bring against us — charges which may be reducible to two. In the first place, they say that we, the Government, did not foresee the length of this war or the difficulties of the war, and, in the second place we have done all we ought to have done, and that we are not doing all we ought to do in order to bring the war to a conclusion. As to the first charge I plead guilty. I admit frankly that we were not wise enough to pierce into the future further than the rest of the world. (Hear, hear.) What others did not see we failed to see, but it was not for want of trying. We consulted everybody who by any possibility could be considered an authority upon this subject. We saw and spoke to Boers and Afrikanders (sic), British subjects and loyalists, whether Dutch or English, civilians and soldiers, and I say that, as far as I know, there was not one single man who was entitled to

the slightest confidence or even pretended to be an authority upon the subject who anticipated the prolonged resistance which we have incurred. That was the case. (Cries of "Butler.") There's another fable (Great laughter.) A distinguished general is to be quoted, not on his own authority, without his leave, by some person who perhaps has never seen him, as having predicted all that has happened. I wish I knew that general myself.

It seems to me that we stand very much in need of men who can predict the future and turn out afterwards not to be false prophets; but we did not meet with him at the time (laughter), and even later it was the same thing.

THE MISTAKEN CALCULATION.

When Lord Roberts came home (cheers), when he had practically destroyed anything in the nature of organized resistance ("Oh, oh," and cheers), when the Boer Governments were in flight, when every principal town was in our hands, when the communications were held by our soldiers, when we had tens of thousands of prisoners, we thought that the war was practically at an end (cheers), and we said so. (Hear, hear.) And we were mistaken (a voice, "At the time") and so was everybody else. (Cheers.) It is very easy to be wise after the event, but at that time we assumed, in accordance, I believe, with every historical precedent, that the men — who were brave men, but at the same time shrewd men — whom we had defeated would accept their defeat, would accept the generous terms that we offered to them, would accept a settlement which would have been for the advance of their country. They, unfortunately, were encouraged to further resistance. They were encouraged by lying misrepresentations (Cheers.), by the hope of foreign intervention, and, when that failed them, by the expectation that there would be a change in the feelings of the people of this country; that this Government would be turned out and that another Government would come in and would be willing to repeat the story of Majuba. (Cheers.) We may condemn those who misled them; we may regret the obstinacy, the mistake which has brought about a guerilla warfare, disastrous, indeed, to us, but still more disastrous to them and to their country , but I think we are ready to pay some meed* of admiration to the brave men, for brave they are, who have against such odds, with a tenacity and courage that are worthy of their race and of their history, maintained this resistance against our overwhelming forces. (Cheers.) We admire their tenacity; let us meet it with an equal resolution (cheers) which alone will make us worthy to be their conquerors in war and their friends in peace. (Loud cheers.) But if I admit, as I admitted,

that we underestimated the resistance which we had to meet, I utterly repudiate the charge that the Government has left anything undone which would be likely or could possibly conduce to an earlier termination of the war. (Cheers.) Of course, we could at any time have ended the war by conceding everything that was asked for. There is an easy way of settling a fight — to scuttle out of it. (Laughter.).

* Meed – (archaic) a person's deserved share of praise, honour, etc.

THE KITCHENER-BOTHA NEGOTIATIONS.

I observe that in one or perhaps in more papers, which represent our opponents, there is a new story that we might have had peace on honourable terms at the time of Lord Kitchener's negotiations with General Botha. (Hear, hear.) You think so? (Laughter.) I do not blame you. You have been told this again and again by the papers which you read, by the people whom you trust; but you have been misinformed. (Cheers.) The statement is absolutely untrue (cheers), and if you had the time, which I am afraid you have not, to study for yourselves the documents and the papers which have been presented to Parliament this would be perfectly clear to you. But, relying upon your inability to make yourselves acquainted with the facts, you are deceived and played with by those party organs. (Cheers.) Now, what are the facts? We have it on record in the very words of General Botha, of Mr. Steyn, of General De Wet, and other leaders of the Boers that they would accept no conditions of peace which did not give them their absolute independence. If you were willing to concede that, of course you may have had peace. But I do not call those honourable terms. (Cheers.) And in one of these documents, which it is worth while to bear in mind, the manifesto addressed to his own people, General Botha declared that the origin of the war went back, not to the Jameson Raid — that is another story (laughter) — not to the iniquities of the Colonial Secretary (laughter) — that is another story (laughter) — but it went back to the annexation in 1877, and to the inadequate reparation which was made by Mr. Gladstone. (Cheers.) And so you have it on the authority of the Commandant-General of the Boers that what they want now is not even the independence which they had before the war, but an independence more absolute than even Mr. Gladstone was at any time willing to concede to them. But when I read the declarations, which I have no reason to suppose are not perfectly honest, by some of those who advocate a peace at any price I wonder whether they have considered what would be the result of an arrangement made upon anything like those terms. No doubt, give the Boers their absolute independence, and in that case you might have an end to the present war. But what would remain?

THE RESULTS OF PEACE ON BOER TERMS.

What do you think would happen then with regard to the loyalists, your fellow-subjects at the Cape and in Natal (hear, hear), the refugees from the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, whom you would have basely deserted? I heard in the House of Commons in the mouths of many eloquent members of the Opposition bitter complaints and great sympathy expressed with the sufferings of the Boor, which I believe in every case have been the inevitable hardships of a war which they commenced. But I have never heard one word from that quarter, one single word, of sympathy for the men of your blood and race who have held true to the flag through all these trials. Do you suppose that they have not suffered by the war? Rich men have become poor, poor men have sunk to starvation. Their sufferings have been greater than those of the Boers (hear, hear), and they are undeserved. (Cheers.) They have given from a small population 30,000 men to serve their Queen in arms and these are the men whom once more we are to leave in the lurch and, for the sake of a shameful peace, we are to leave them to the tender mercies of their enemies. This you would do by making peace on the terms of the Boers. But that is not even all. You have other colonies. Do you want to alienate the feeling and the sympathy which have been so splendidly shown by the self-governing colonies of the Empire? Do you want to teach them who have allowed to you the primacy in the great work of its defence and maintenance — do you want to teach them we are unequal to the task; unworthy of their confidence? Do you want to make them ashamed of the splendid co-operation which they have accorded to us (cheers) — a co-operation more valuable to us in the future in all its potential consequences than an alliance with the greatest of Continental nations? (Cheers.) I will waste no more time (" Go on") in considering such a proposition (Laughter.) I am confident what your decision will be.

THE GOVERNMENT'S CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

I go on to a complaint which perhaps is more serious, a complaint that we, the Government, have not pressed forward this war with sufficient vigour. Well, I do not I think I have ever been afraid of admitting an error that has been committed. But before I can deal with this charge let me know against whom is it directed? Is it directed against the Government, the civilian administration or is it directed against our military advisers? If it directed against the Government in its civilian capacity then all I can say is

that I hope that no Government will ever be found in this country that will ever take the details of military operations out of the hands of the military authorities. (Cheers.) We are responsible for their selection; we are responsible so long as we continue to employ them, and if it were charged against us that we had ignored their advice, that we had failed to give them the assistance and the compensation which they desired, I should say it was a serious charge. (Hear, hear.) But it is a charge which could not be truly made, It is the fact that we have given everything that has been asked for in the way of troops, of supplies, of reinforcements, but there is one charge which does undoubtedly affect the Government. It is that we have been too lenient towards our opponents. (Hear, hear.) It is that we have not dealt with the rebels or with the guerilla bands with sufficient severity. That is our responsibility; that is the policy of the Government which is questioned. Well, ladies and gentlemen, there is no subject which has given us greater anxiety, more serious consideration. I think that the time has come — is coming — when measures of greater severity may be necessary ("Hear, hear," and cheers) and if that time comes we can find precedents for anything that we may do in the action of those nations who now criticize our "barbary" and "cruelty," but whose example in Poland, in the Caucasus, in Almeria, in Tongking*, in Bosnia, in the Franco-German war, whose example we have never even approached. (Cheers.) But it seems to me that the governing considerations ought to be whether such measures, whatever they may be, will really conduce to quicken the progress of the war; otherwise I do not suppose that even the most extreme man would suggest that we should take them, and, for myself, and I believe for the Government, I am justified in saying that we would rather be blamed for being too slow than for being too fast (hear, hear), and when I read some of the demands which are made upon us for wholesale confiscation, for wholesale execution, I confess I have not up to the present time, been able to convince myself that those measures would conduce either to a speedy termination of the war or to a satisfactory peace at the end of it. All I can say is what we find to be necessary in that we believe to be the claims of the higher humanity, everything that could reasonably be expected to induce those who are now in arms against us to lay down their arms, will be put in force by the Government so long as they have your confidence and support. (Hear.)

* Tonkin - The name used from 1883 to 1945 for the French protectorate of Tonkin.

THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION.

But if the charge is not against us, if the charge of not prosecuting the war with sufficient vigour is directed not to our policy, but to the military administration, then I say it is unjust and it is not proved. (Cheers.) Of course mistakes have been made; we have been the first to admit those mistakes and to endeavour to remedy them; but under what circumstances have they been made? Every man's hand at the present moment seems to be against the War Office. Is it not right to recollect that the War Office, in spite of all its defects, with the rust of 50 years of peace upon it, has nevertheless been able to put into the field a force three or four times as large as the force for which it was organized and designed? (Cheers.) Not we alone, but a long succession of Governments have decided that the utmost force which the War Office should be prepared to furnish for foreign war was two army corps, We have sent five army corps to South Africa (cheers), and at the present moment we have 200,000 men at least in the country. Now, I appeal to any man of business among you, to anyone who knows what a great business is, and I would ask if suddenly that business were called upon for a job three or four times as large as that for which the works were designed, would you be surprised if there was some little confusion, if there were some mistakes? And under these circumstances, while I am glad that criticism should freely be directed against us, against our administration, because that criticism helps to find out where we are in the wrong and to correct it, I think it is unfair and ungenerous not to remember that the War Office under Lord Lansdowne and under Mr. Brodrick (loud cheers), both of whom have done splendid service to their country (cheers), has carried out a task no other nation in the world would have been capable of carrying out (cheers), and has transported, equipped, and provided with food and arms and clothing this magnificent force of a quarter of a million of men 6,000 miles from these shores and 1,500 miles from your principal base of supplies. I say again mistakes have been made, no one is more conscious of that than the Government; but look back to the most glorious chapter of your history and you will find that even then men were fallible. (Laughter.) The greatest War Minister this country ever had was Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, and yet at the beginning of the Seven Years War Lord Chatham planned several unsuccessful expeditions and employed several generals who did not win victories before he discovered General Wolfe. (Cheers.) Since the time of Marlborough our greatest general was the Duke of Wellington; he began his career in India with a reverse, and although we remember with pride the battle of Waterloo (cheers), we conveniently forget the defeat at Badajoz and the very doubtful victory of Talavera. Let us be — I do not say optimistic — let us be fair to those who are entrusted with the executive work in this time of tremendous stress. Let us not blame them. Do not blame us for any faults

you may discover, but remember also that, after, all, we have done something which is worthy of recognition. (Cheers.)

GUERILLA WARFARE.

The war has now entered upon a new stage; it has entered upon that guerilla stage which all experience — the experience of all nations — shows to be tedious and costly. I do not think that there is any case, I do not remember any case, in which a guerilla war was ultimately successful, in which the guerillas ultimately obtained the victory; but it has always been a long business, and we have got to look the facts in the face. It is a test to which this nation is being submitted. (Hear, hear.) It is a great thing for any nation to be capable of showing unselfish enthusiasm, to make great sacrifices in a moment of passionate emotion, but it is a still greater and nobler national characteristic to persevere to the end in face of all difficulties and unforeseen obstacles, and carry out the object with which you have commenced the struggle. (Hear, hear.) On the part of the Government I promise this — that we shall do all that is in our power; we shall not be afraid to call upon you for fresh sacrifices, if these be needed, The signs of the times are not unfavourable. Day by day the forces of the enemy are being diminished; day by day—and this, perhaps is equally or more important — the resumption of industry goes on (hear, hear) in our enlarged areas in protected districts. From a military point of view there is absolutely no cause for anxiety, although every day's delay does undoubtedly prolong the agony to the country and render the return to prosperity more distant and add to the charges upon the people at home. When I think of the sacrifices that your ancestors made in order to gain this Empire, I will never believe that you, their heirs, will shrink from any effort that may be necessary to maintain it. (Loud cheers.),

The EARL of DALKEITH, M.P., moved the following resolution: — “That this meeting expresses its confidence in his Majesty's Government and its unabated support of their South African policy, conveys its thanks to Mr. Chamberlain for his speech, congratulates him on the signal success of his patriotic labours in the cause of colonial federation and Imperial union, and records its grateful admiration of his patient and fearless statesmanship in South Africa.”

Mr. CAMERON CORBETT, M.P., seconded the resolution.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, on rising to reply, was received with loud and prolonged cheering. He said: — I rise very gratefully to acknowledge the cordiality with which you have received the resolution and to thank the mover and seconder for speeches which, indeed, are much too flattering ("No, no"), but which at the same time are not altogether ungratifying. (Laughter.) I have to thank you also for the patience with which you listened to a speech which exceeded somewhat the limits that I intended, and I am not certain that I should not make a very bad return to you if I were to attempt anything in the nature of a second oration. (Cries of " Go on.") And yet I am tempted by a word which fell from my friend Mr. Cameron Corbett to say something more to you. (Cheers.)

SOCIAL REFORMS.

The lines of my speech were so laid that it did not come within them for me to say anything to you on the subject of those social reforms in which I think I may claim to have shared a great and a permanent interest. (Hear, hear.) The other day Mr. Asquith, in language which I suppose was intended to be epigrammatic, talked of the failure of the Government, and whatever you suppose, whatever may be our merits in regard to Imperial and colonial policy, if you want anything of the nature of domestic legislation (a voice, "Old-age pensions "), you must look to him and not to us. He said, in addition, that we had neglected temperance and fumbled with old-age pensions, and that generally we had been a complete failure in every attempt to deal (a voice, " No ") — that was his statement—with the social wants of the people; and then he descended from generalities to particulars, and he called me to task because, when I was speaking the other night to my friends, my temperance friends, in Birmingham, I repeated some truths which I have told them again and again during the last five-and-twenty years, and which I am perfectly ready to repeat to you. I have told them that I know of no question of greater importance than the temperance question. (Hear, hear.) I know of nothing which any statesman could do more deserving of his country's gratitude than to deal with this question and to reduce the intemperance which unfortunately prevails. (Hear, hear.) That I said five-and-twenty, five-and thirty years ago, and that I am perfectly willing to say again. But I pointed out to them that during that period very little had been done in the way of legislation, and I attributed that to the fact that the legislation proposed has been too extreme (hear, hear) for the majority of the British people, and that the men who have promoted that legislation refused to accept half a loaf when they might have got it and have determined that

they would have all or none (a voice, “ Perfectly right ”) ; and now I say to you that if any of you have been misled by Mr. Asquith to think that I am indifferent to the importance of this subject, or that I am opposed to legislation, then wittingly, or unwittingly, he has misled you, he and I venture to believe that even now you will gain more from the efforts of men who, like myself, at all events, are practical politicians (hear, hear), and who do not, who have never promised what they could not perform (cheers), than you will from those who, like Mr. Asquith, try to catch the votes of the extreme section by holding out anticipations which most certainly will never be fulfilled. So much for the personal question.

LIBERAL AND UNIONIST LEGISLATION CONTRASTED.

But now let us come to the general. Mr. Asquith attacks the present Government and the Unionist party for not having carried out social reforms. Since the Home Rule split there have been 12 years of Unionist Government and three years of Home Rule Government, and in the three years what was done? How many old-age pensions did you get (loud laughter) in the three years? What did they do? What have they to say? Not one single reform of the slightest importance to the welfare of the working classes was given to the people during those three years of office. They tried then, as they had tried before, these extreme proposals, and they were, of course, as everyone knew they would be, defeated; but with the exception of the Parish Councils Act, which after all was only the completion of a Conservative measure, the measure for county government introduced by the previous Conservative Government (cheers) — with that exception there was nothing of the slightest importance which they carried through during their three years. Now what did we do? We had 12 years, six years of a Conservative Government and five or six years of a Unionist Government. Well, let us think. It is difficult to remember, our good deeds are so numerous. (Laughter.) But let us see if I can remind you of a few of them. We gave you free education. (Cheers.) We gave you the corollary to compulsory attendance. No longer are men in this country forced to send their children to school and pay fees for them even when it is with difficulty that they can provide for their subsistence. That was one of the greatest boons which was every given to the working classes of this country, and it was a Conservative measure. We gave you county government, we gave you local government in London, we gave you local government in Scotland and Ireland, we gave you the Allotments and the Small Holdings Act, and we gave you the Act for the protection of life in mines. We gave you the extension of the Factories and

Workshops Act. We gave you — and that is one of the last things we have done — we gave you the Workmen's Compensation for Accidents Act, which, I venture to say, is the charter of the working man at this time. (Cheers.) That was the Act, I think, which Mr. Asquith said we had “fumbled.” Fumbled, forsooth, and why? Because there was some litigation under it. There have been hundreds of thousands of cases settled and men have got full and ample compensation for the accidents which they have unfortunately suffered without litigation, without trouble, without question, men who would not have got a penny before, and because there have been in the working of a new Act some thousand — for there are not more than 11 hundred — some thousand cases which have been litigated and disputed — because of that, forsooth Mr. Asquith, who could not pass an Act of his own (cheers) is pleased to say that we have “ fumbled ” at legislation, Ladies and gentlemen, judge us in the future by what we have done in the past. (Hear, hear.)

OLD-AGE PENSIONS.

I am one of those who think that something should be done to stimulate provision for old age. I know it is one of the falsehoods which are told about me — they are like the sands of the sea (laughter), you cannot count them. I never promised old-age pensions. I never promised anything of the kind, and I did everything in my power to prevent people from having anticipations raised beyond what I thought was practical. What I did say, and what I say now, is that the time may come, and will come, and ought to come—when the end of the war has arrived — when once more the Government may devote itself to these matters, and that it may be possible to do something to encourage and stimulate the provision for old age which is to be made by the working class themselves. I would never do anything which would discourage thrift for I should think in doing so, that I did a greater evil than any old-age pensions could supply, f mention the matter because there was an interruption in reference to it, but this is not the time, of course, for speaking of legislation in the future. But I ask you to believe that those who have done so much may be trusted to do what is still required (cheers), and it is not by vapouring and boasting and promising that the nation is advanced. It is by practical performances such as those to which I have alluded.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is one more pleasant duty which you will wish to perform, and that is, I am sure, to pass a vote of thanks to the Duke of Montrose, who occupied the chair to-night. We thank him for coming amongst us, for his opening address, and we are quite sure that if the qualities of a chairman had been required in this most orderly meeting that he would have exhibited them in the fullest capacity. I admit that there was a telegram in which I speak not altogether respectfully of the House to which he belongs (laughter) and of some of those with whom he works, but, whatever I may have said then — and I am not certain that I am inclined to go back from it (laughter) — circumstances have changed since, and the House of Lords has conferred upon this country a benefit for which, indeed, we should be ungrateful if we ever forgot it. (Cheers.) They saved this country from the greatest danger in which it has ever lain since the time of the great Continental struggle at the beginning of the century. They saved the country by giving the country time to reflect, and consider, and decide. They stopped the fatal policy which would have destroyed our influence and power. For that we ought to be eternally grateful to them and to the Duke, as one of them; I plead that in this recognition I am making some amends (laughter) for anything said on past occasions I may wish to have forgotten. Mr. Chamberlain then put the resolution of thanks which was carried unanimously, The Duke of Montrose briefly acknowledged the vote, and the audience, after singing the National Anthem, dispersed. Mr. Chamberlain, at the close of the meeting, drove to Sir Charles Dalrymple's house at New Bailes amid the cheers, mingled with some hisses, of a large crowd which had congregated outside the building.
